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SUBJECT: EC'S BARROSO PUSHES FOR A UN FORCE IN BASHIR MEETING

REF: KHARTOUM 02341

¶1. (SBU) EC President Jose Manuel Barroso departed Sudan on the evening of October 1 after two days of visits in Khartoum and El Fasher. Barroso met with President Bashir for two hours on September 30, including a half hour one-on-one session; however, EC contacts reported Bashir did not budge on his rejection of UNSCR 1706 and a UN PKO. Barroso reiterated the international community's commitment to UNSCR 1706, but also encouraged Bashir to show some flexibility and consider a possible third way. In comments to the press which were confirmed to Poloff through EC counterparts on October 2, though Bashir appeared intransigent on the issue of UN intervention, he agreed with Barroso that the current situation in Darfur is deteriorating and a continuation of the status quo is not tenable. Bashir also expressed concern at Sudan's increasing isolation, though he did not offer any new solutions.

¶2. (U) Following the Khartoum visit, Barroso traveled to El Fasher, where he met with AU Force Commander Aprezi, the Wali of North Darfur, and AU Deputy Head of Mission Gibril. Barroso was accompanied by European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid Luis Michel. According to EC contacts, the visit largely was intended to be symbolic to demonstrate continued international concern with the deteriorating situation in Darfur. Barroso used the occasion to announce 40 million euros of new humanitarian aid. Barroso further pledged an additional 40 million euros of Dutch aid for reconstruction projects. These reconstruction funds were to have been announced at the October pledging conference, which has been postponed. The pledge was made contingent on the security situation permitting the projects to move forward.

¶3. (SBU) From Sudan, Barroso traveled to Addis Ababa for meetings at the AU. Barroso indicated he would speak to Konare about finding a third way through an AU-UN force mix. His impression was Bashir ultimately would be amenable to this, but believed high-level discussion between the AU, U.S., UK, and other European partners was necessary to reach a consensus position.

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